

VZCZCXRO3440
RR RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHLJ #0482/01 2981307
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 241307Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6991
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0232
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LJUBLJANA 000482

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/ERA AND EUR/CE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/24/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [MASS](#) [EUN](#) [SI](#)

SUBJECT: PM JANSKA GIVES INCOMING GOVERNMENT THE BENEFIT OF
THE DOUBT, PREDICTS CONTINUITY IN FOREIGN POLICY

REF: LJUBLJANA 459

Classified By: Amb. Yousif B. Ghafari, Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

Summary

1. (C) During a one-on-one lunch with the Ambassador, outgoing PM Janez Jansa predicted that - with the exception of Iraq - Slovenia's foreign policy would not change much under the new center-left government, and that the U.S.-Slovenia relationship would continue to be strong. The consensus for maintaining Slovenian troops in Afghanistan is fragile, but Jansa gave no indication that the new government would change policy. Jansa claimed that his government's overspending on the EU Presidency had cost him the election. Until the new government takes over, his government is focused on the financial crisis and is looking to the November 15 Financial Summit for a "Bretton Woods" solution. He said that Slovenia's tourism sector had already started to feel the effects of a slowing European economy. End Summary.

EU Presidency Hurt PM's Party in Elections

2. (C) In a cordial lunch on October 23, the Ambassador expressed the USG's appreciation to outgoing PM Jansa for his government's pro-American and pro-NATO foreign policy and said we looked forward to working with him in the opposition. The Ambassador also praised Jansa for his accomplishments, including a successful EU Presidency, entry into the Eurozone and Schengen, and deployment of trainers to NTM-I despite public ambivalence. Jansa commented that the EU Presidency had cost him the September election because the public had so criticized his government for overspending. The PM also lamented that his government had been forced to battle the media the past four years; he predicted that the new government would likely continue to have difficulties, even though the media was left-leaning. He hoped the new government would be formed as soon as possible, noting the awkwardness of running a technical government when a new parliament was sitting. He estimated that Slovenia might have a new government by November 21.

No Big Changes in Slovenia's Foreign Policy

3. (C) Jansa predicted that bilateral relations would remain strong under the new government. He said that Slovenia would maintain its NATO and EU commitments; however, the Left would spend less on defense. Jansa confirmed that Slovenia would very likely withdraw its two instructors from Iraq (reftel). He noted that the new government would likely "review" Slovenia's deployment in Afghanistan, but Jansa did not indicate any predisposition on the part of the new government

to change or withdraw from that mission. He commented that Slovenia would stay the course in Kosovo. The PM also expressed concern rising tension between the ethnic Albanians and ethnic Slavs in Macedonia.

Concerned about Economy and Financial Crisis

14. (C) The PM complimented the U.S., speculating that it would be the first to bounce back from the financial crisis because of education and innovation. Discussing the November 15 summit in Washington, Jansa compared it to Bretton Woods in terms of its importance in establishing international financial order. He stated that his government was spending lots of time focused on the financial crisis. He worried that Slovenia would start to feel the effects as the bigger European economies took a downturn. He added that tourism was already down, which was negatively affecting the economy. Jansa rued the failure of the Harrah's deal, acknowledging that it was a "huge mistake," as the entertainment complex would have brought international tourists to Slovenia. He added that Slovenia's tourism sector needed lots of assistance and that Ljubljana could use more hotels. He responded positively to the Ambassador's suggestion of trying to attract an international hotel to Slovenia. PM Jansa also expressed regret that his government was unable to do more to reform Slovenia's labor laws. He lamented that the inflexible labor market prevented companies and workers from making the most of Slovenia's booming economy.

Comment

LJUBLJANA 00000482 002 OF 002

15. (C) As the leader of the opposition, Jansa will continue to be a major player on Slovenia's political scene. He could be an important ally if another large U.S. investment becomes a possibility. Jansa seems to take Pahor, the putative head of the new government, at his word when Pahor says there will be no change in Slovenia's foreign policy. Again, Jansa could prove to be an ally if this does not turn out to be the case. Finally, if the situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate, it will not matter whether Pahor or Jansa is in power: if a Slovenian soldier comes home in a body bag, the consensus - such as it is - for continued deployment in Afghanistan will collapse and we will have a difficult time convincing Slovenia not to withdraw its troops.

GHAFAIR